

POLITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

his generosity, his yielding disposition, his desire to have everybody happy, and above all his desire to see all the people of the United States enter again upon the full privileges of citizenship with equality among all." Andrew Johnson reigned in his place with his angry watchword, Treason is a crime and must be made odious. Lincoln, declares Grant, would have proved the best friend the South could have had. The book ends on a note of kindness and peace. " I feel that we are on the eve of a new era, when there is to be great harmony-between the Federal and the Confederate. I cannot stay to be a living witness to the correctness of this prophecy, but I feel it within me that it is to be so.*' Four days after writing these moving words he was dead.

Theodore Roosevelt's *Autobiography* , unlike that of Grant, is the work of a practised pen. Written and published in 1913, it made no pretence to reveal *the secrets of state which were reserved for the official life by Butlin Bishop, the first volume of which was revised by its hero ; yet there is plenty of political as well as personal interest in the story. Nearly two-thirds of the volume are devoted to the manifold activities of the Harvard student, the cow-boy, the historian of the West, the head of the New York Police, the Roughrider in the Cuban war, the Governor of New York state. There is a breezy vigour in the narrative which carries the reader along, though there is little distinction of style or thought. No man ever enjoyed his life more fully or was less, troubled by doubts. Maxims are strewn across the pages. " Do not hit at all if it can be avoided, but never hit softly." " Practical efficiency is common, and lofty idealism not uncommon; it is the combination which is necessary and the combination is rare.* The reader is obviously intended to realise that the qualities

were combined in the ex-President, and that he was still a power in the land, despite his unsuccessful attempt in 1912 to fight his way back to the White House.

No event in history has given birth to such a Utter of auto-biographies as the first world war. With few exceptions the actors felt the urge to describe their doings, to explain their policy, to shift the responsibility for failure or defeat on to other shoulders. We are reminded of a gigantic state trial in which the witnesses press forward in crowds to tell their tale and claim their reward. Most of them seem to the uncritical reader to make out a pkusable case, and it requires special knowledge to detect the *suppnssio veri* and *suggestio falsi* in